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FUTURE PLANNING: LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION IN EAST TIMOR

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Current State of Education: Successes

1. Provision of Schools and Teachers

Table 1: Number of government schools, students and teachers in 1993

	Schools	Students	Teachers
Primary School	650	110,815	6,528
Junior High School	101	22,495	1,258
Senior High School	34	11,447	772
Vocational Schools			
~Mechanical	2	830	92
~Commerce/Scrtrl	8	3,149	186
~Agricultural	4	867	55
~Home Economics	1	284	28

Source: Pemerintah Daerah Propinsi Daerah Tingkat I Timor Timur: Rencana Pembangunan Lima Tahun Keenam 1994/95 - 1998/99

Table 2: Number of Catholic schools

Primary School	115
Junior High	30
Senior High	12
Vocational High	4

Sources: Catholic figures from Mary MacKillop Institute of East Timorese Studies Vol 1 No 2 February 1996

Estimated numbers of students in Catholic schools: 30,000

Table 3: Number of Portuguese schools and students in 1974

	Students	Schools
Primary school	60,000	456
Secondary school	1,200 *	

Source: Dunn pp 6-7, 27.
* 1820 students in 1973 is another figure given in "Educational Expectations of Vietnamese and Timorese Parents in the Darwin Area" (Nan Bell) p 14.

Notes:

Portuguese provision of schools was about 3 times less than under the Indonesians. BUT:

a) Portuguese education in Portugal also limited. A high illiteracy rate.
b) Portugal very poor
c) Parents only sent 1 or 2 children to school. Therefore less frustration.
d) Educational provision not as low in the 1970s as is often claimed.

Students who attended secondary schools were of high social status - Portuguese, Mestizos

2. Literacy

1974 - 92% illiterate (8% literate)
1985 - 66% illiterate (34% literate)
1993 - 52% illiterate (48% literate)

Source: Kantor Statistik Timor Timur, 1994 page xiii. Also quoted in an Indonesian government publication, East Timor Today, which adds that the East Timor illiteracy rate is higher than in all Indonesian provinces.

BUT: This 48% literate population includes:

a) Indonesian immigrants
b) semi-literate people who enrolled in school, but dropped out

3. Successful Initiatives

a) Universitas Timor Timur - an initiative of the Regional East Timor government
b) Politeknik - a new politeknik on a new site
c) Minor Seminary, Balide - the training ground for future priests. The successor to Soibada and Dare.
d) Salesian vocational schools (3) - high quality institutions in out-of-Dili locations.
e) St Yosef Senior High School.
f) Institut Pastoral Indonesia (Catholic tertiary institute)

Current State of Education: Problems

1. Teachers

a) Teaching skills are low level (chalk and talk, rote memory for annual exams)
b) Low professional conduct of teachers (eg much absenteeism; children left unattended)
c) Insufficient teacher housing in regions outside Dili *
d) 26% of teachers are unqualified for their positions *
e) Only one Timorese secondary teacher. Timorese have trained as teachers, but do not take up positions. *

Source: * Jakarta Post, September 1992 quoting the Director of East Timor education

2. Class Sizes

Class sizes in Timor are commonly: 60 (primary), 50 (secondary).

3. Literacy

Literacy rates have risen, however these figures obscure the actual literacy capabilities of those referred to as literate.

a) There are many complaints that primary school graduates cannot read or write (Saldanha p 75)

b) Many children counted as literate have in fact dropped out of school, or been intermittent in attendance, or completed primary school without graduating

c) Most Timorese in the Civil Service do not have the educational qualifications to rise above the lowest two rungs of the ladder (Golongan I and II)

4. School Attendance and Cost of Schooling

Of the 172,572 people aged between 5 and 14 years old in 1992, only 132,574 (76.8) were studying at primary, junior and senior high schools. The remainder - 23.2% - were not at school. Source: Kantor Statistik Timor Timur 1992.

Table 4:School attendance of children aged 7-12 years in Maubisse sub-district (*kecamatan)* October 1988.

Village	*At school*	*Left school*	*No schooling*	*Total*
Aituto	294	14	50	358
Edi	115	4	60	179
Fatubisse	83	8	56	147
Horaikik	372	16	48	436
Liurai	84	6	58	148
Manelobas	56	-	64	120
Manetu	128	10	54	192
Maulau	199	25	29	253
Maubisse	631	4	60	695
TOTAL	1,962 (74%)	87 (4%)	579 (22%)	2,628

Source: Office of Kecamatan Maubisse.

Children do not attend school for a variety of reasons. The main reason is:
a) parents cannot afford the school fees, books and uniform

Other reasons are:
b) they are working in the fields
c) sickness (which is widespread, and hard to overcome without money for medicine)
d) family disruption, which means children have to keep the household going (fetch water, look after younger siblings).

Cost

School uniform is compulsory. This means that new uniform must be bought as the child gets older. Ideally the child has 2 uniforms; if not the uniform must be washed daily, which entails the purchase of soap, and lessens the uniform's life and the chances of handing it on the uniform to a younger sibling. In addition parents are obliged to buy Scout uniform and sports uniform.

School books consist of one writing book and one textbook per school subject. At secondary school there are between 12 and 16 subjects. The curriculum changes every 5 years, so there is a limit how many of the textbooks can be handed down to younger siblings. The costs of the textbooks, which come from Jakarta, are considerably more expensive than in

Jakarta, because of freight charges.

School fees, though not great, must be paid. In addition there are exam fees. Sometimes school exact other charges too.

6. School Resources

Indonesian classrooms in Timor have the bare minimum - benches, tables and a blackboard. Usually there is no power.

There are almost no teaching or learning resources of any kind, eg teaching aids, resource books, charts, pictures, libraries, photocopiers. Children rely upon the teacher, and, in the unlikely event that they have one, a textbook. Teachers equally relies upon the textbook (which they must buy, and therefore sometimes do not have).

There is no learning environment in the schools. The atmosphere resembles a barrack-room.

6. Vocational Schools

Indonesian schools provide a general education till the end of Junior High school. Students may then continue with a general education (Senior High school) which leads to entry to universities, institutes and academies, or go to a Vocational High school which equips them with more marketable skills such as cooking, book-keeping, agriculture, building and mechanics.

There are 48 Senior High schools and 19 Vocational High schools. Given the difficulty of gaining entry to university and later employment as a graduate, there is a great need for more Vocational High schools.

7. Curriculum

The curriculum of Indonesian schools is focussed towards nation-building. For instance, the core subjects in Senior High schools are:

1) Religion (in groups: Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Hindu or Buddhism)
2) Education in Pancasila Morals
3) History of the National Struggle (ie against the Dutch in early 20th century)
4) Indonesian Language and Literature
5) Indonesian and World History
6) Geography

Apart from a recent optional extra in some provinces for "local content", the curriculum makes no allowance for Timorese history, geography, arts or oral literature. The curriculum is alien to Timorese students.

Tetum

In Indonesian schools the Indonesian language must be used as the language of instruction,

though in the first three years of school the local language may be used as a means of easing students into an understanding of Indonesian.

Tetum therefore cannot be used as the language of instruction.

Schools can introduce the local language as a school subject (eg some Javanese schools teach Javanese). Whether this is allowed in East Timorese government schools is not known.

In 1995 Bishop Belo ordained that Catholic schools could teach Tetum for up to 6 hours a week. This (I think) means teaching Tetum, not teaching other subjects *in* Tetum. The problem is that Tetum is an oral language, and therefore there are no written Tetum resources, for reading and practice. In other words it is unlikely that Tetum is being taught even in Catholic schools.

8. Independent Education

Independent schools, such as Catholic and non-denominational schools, are allowed to operate throughout Indonesia and East Timor, so long as they are registered with the government, teach the Indonesian approved curriculum, and enter students for the state exams. Catholic schools constitute about one quarter of the total number of schools in East Timor.

Sao José College (Dili) was a Portuguese Catholic school which survived the invasion and continued to cater for students who did not want an Indonesian language education. It taught in Portuguese and indirectly supported East Timorese cultural aspirations. Because it was a diocesan school, the authorities were reluctant to close it down, but harrassed the teachers and students. Some disappeared. The school's qualifications were not recognised by the Indonesian education system. Finally pro-Indonesian Jesuit teachers were sent from Java for the purpose of bringing the school into the mainstream. The new St Yosef school began the 1993-1994 year with the Indonesian language and curriculum.

Chinese schools, teaching in Chinese, existed in Portuguese times, for the benefit of the 2% of the population who were Chinese. However these schools were not allowed to re-open under the Indonesians.

9. Adult and Community Education

Adult vocational education programmes are provided in areas such as rural development and industrial development. It seems that these courses are conducted in Indonesian, not Tetum.

10. Tertiary Education

Table 5: Numbers of lecturers and students in Tertiary institutions in 1993

	Lecturers	Students
Universitas Timor Timur	126	1154*
Politeknik	27	900
Institut Pastoral Indonesia (IPI)		500
University Terbuka (Open U)		242

Source: Daniel Kameo p 53.

* 60% are Timorese

1) Universitas Timor Timur (Untim)

Founded in 1987 by regional government, and funded by regional government as well as student fees. Not a full state university. Situated in old government office buildings in central Dili. There are three faculties:

- ~ Agriculture
- ~ Teacher Education (FKIP)
- ~ Social and Political Science (Fisipol)

Untim has almost no books in the library. Those that exist are in English, which cannot be understood, or only with great difficulty, by students. The lecturer/student ratio is high. There is no academic atmosphere. Employment for graduates in East Timor is hard to find.

2) Politeknik. Founded in 1990. Situated at Hera, 10 km from Dili, on a new site with new custom-built teaching areas, workshops and hostels.

3) Institut Pastoral Indonesia (IPI). A Catholic college which trains catechists in a 4 year non-degree course.

Students who wish to be become priests must go to Kupang, Ledolero (Flores, NTT), or Malang (East Java). There is no seminary in East Timor.

4) Scholarships are provided by government, church and private organisations for study in Jakarta, Malang, Denpasar. Graduates find it hard to obtain employment in East Timor.

11. Employment

Table 6: Numbers of school and university graduates who are employed and unemployed

	Primary	Junior High	Senior High	University	Total
Job-seekers	518	1,159	7,526	791	9,994 (100%)
Employed	210	432	927	172	1741 (18%)
Unemployed	308	727	6,599	619	8,253 (82%)

Source: Kantor Statistik Timor Timur 1992

The table above shows the high levels of unemployment for school graduates. Gaining employment in an Indonesian dominated environment requires money or connections. East Timorese have neither.

Education in an Independent East Timor

1. Teachers

AIM: A body of well qualified and professional teachers

a) Vastly improved training in teaching methodology, subject matter, and teacher accountability.

b) Inservice training courses and on-the-job training for practising teachers.

2. Class Sizes

AIM: A huge increase in teacher numbers

More teachers are needed to:

a) make up for the Indonesian teachers who do not stay in East Timor
b) reduce the very large class sizes
c) fill the current gaps in areas such as maths and science, and in newly opened vocational schools

Increase the intake at Untim's Teacher Education faculty, and open a second Teacher Training college at Baucau.

3. Literacy

AIM: Real literacy for all who complete primary school.

Literacy-for-all is dependent upon many factors:

a) Provision of a wide range of reading material
b) Regular school attendance
c) Improved teaching skills
d) Reduced class sizes

4. School Attendance and Cost of Schooling

AIM: Free primary schooling for all, for the sake of regular school attendance for all.

Because absenteeism is largely caused by poverty, there should be incentives for parents to send their children to school regularly.

a) There need be no school uniform, except for a school distinguishing feature, such as an armband, or badge. There need be no Scout uniform. Parents should buy sports uniform where possible.
b) School textbooks are supplied by schools, in class sets (one book per child). The books are kept at the school, and are available to children during lessons. Parents provide the writing books for children.

5. School Resources

AIM: Each school to have class sets of books, photocopiers, and a box of resource materials.

In view of the high cost of resources, schools should be encouraged to maintain these materials on a $ for $ basis. Every $ raised by the school is matched by a $ from the government.

6. Vocational Schools

AIM: Increase the number of Vocational High Schools

The imbalance between the 48 General High Schools, leading to university, and the 19 Vocational High Schools, leading to trades and lower levels of the Civil Service, must be redressed, either by opening more Vocational High schools, or by converting General High Schools into Vocational High schools. In many smaller towns, classrooms in the General High school could be converted into vocational workshops, so that the school becomes a combined school with general and vocational streams.

7. Curriculum

AIM: To make the curriculum relevant to Timorese children

The curriculum must include:

a) Timorese history, within a context of the regional history of the eastern Indonesia

archipelago, and contacts with Western Timorese, Chinese, Portuguese, Dutch and Indonesians.

b) Geography of East Timor and region, conservation and natural history.

c) Timorese weaving, music, dance and customs (marriage, clothes, housing) must find expression in schools.

d) Study of traditional Timorese society and religion.

Tetum

To the extent that there are reading materials in Tetum and the other eleven East Timorese languages, literacy (reading and writing) in traditional languages can be taught to speakers of those languages. However there are very few suitable texts in Tetum, and none in the other languages.

Whether Tetum should be used as the medium of instruction in East Timorese schools will be discussed below.

8. Independent Education

AIM: To encourage non-government education that caters for minority groups

Chinese, Indonesians, Portuguese-speakers and traditional minority groups such as the Fatuluku people who have a distinctive language and customs, should be permitted to establish and fund their own schools, subject to minimum government standards, and the teaching of an established core curriculum.

Similarly Catholic, Protestant and Islamic schools should be allowed.

9. Adult and Community Education

AIM: To make general education and job-oriented training available to a wide range of adults

A high priority in adult education should be "catch-up" literacy and schooling for those who, for Indonesia-occupation-related reasons or reasons of poverty or bad health, never graduated from school. Full time classes should be conducted in various locations, and in Dili, perhaps a full time adult school.

Another priority is education in community decision-making and democratic processes. Training in money-management and small business practice - as it applies to farming and shopkeeping - is also important.

10. Tertiary Education

AIM: To greatly expand the provision of tertiary education within East Timor

Tertiary education abroad (ie out of East Timor) is costly, less oriented to Timorese needs, and prone to produce graduates who do not wish to return to East Timor. First degree education, as well as technical education, should be conducted in East Timor; postgraduate education should be conducted abroad.

Scholarships for undergraduate students (in East Timor) and postgraduate students (abroad) will be necessary, to enable a larger number of students to participate in tertiary education, and to replace the scholarships currently provided by Indonesian individuals, organizations and government.

11. Employment

AIM: To ensure the provision of suitable employment for all East Timorese graduates of tertiary institutions and senior high schools (general and vocational).

The success of the education system depends upon graduates being employed in their areas of speciality. This must not be left to chance. There should be a coordinating body that coordinates the policies of various government departments, as well as independent education providers.

Current Language Situation

Table 7: Current usage of languages relevant to East Timor

	Tetum	Other traditional Languages (11)	Portuguese	Indonesian & Malay	English
Oral usage	~60% - L1 ~10% - L2 ~Mass in all East Timor ~Radio Kmanek	~40% - L1 ~Fatuluku Mass	~Some adults ~Mass in Dili ~Taught at minor seminary as subject	~All teaching ~RRI & TVRI ~Between Indons & Indons/ETs	Hardly spoken
Written usage	~Mass and hymnbook ~Some notices ~Column in Suara TT	NIL	NIL	~ALL govt ~ALL educ ~ALL media	NIL
Course books & textbooks	~Very few	NIL	None in use in ET	Many books, but poor quality	None in use in ET
Used for teaching	Catholic schools teach as subject?	NIL	Catholic schools teach as subject??	Used as M of I and taught as subject in ALL schools and universities	Taught-very badly - in all secondary schools

Notes:

1. Tetum and Indonesian are the languages of common usage.
2. The other traditional languages are still in use in their own areas.
3. Portuguese is rarely used today.

Language of Education in an Independent East Timor

Table 8: Advantages and disadvantages of Tetum, Portuguese, Indonesian/Malay, and English as languages of education in an independent East Timor.

	Tetum	Portuguese	Indon/Malay	English
Already known	Majority of chn & adults: Yes	Children: No. Some adults: Yes	All children & most adults: Yes	Children & adults: No
Course books and textbooks	None. Teachers would need to learn standardized orthography	Yes. Books from Mozambique and Angola most appropriate	Yes. Books from Malaysia far better than Indonesian books	Yes. Wide selection from many countries - Australia, Philippines, Africa
Language of unity with neighbours and world	No. Not spoken outside East Timor region	Spoken widely in world, but distant from East Timor	Spoken widely in immediate region	International language. Spoken regionally in Australia and Philippines
Learnability	Very easy - many speakers and heard daily	Not heard. Not easy.	Easy. Heard daily on radio, in school, from Indons and some ETs	Not heard. Not easy.
Emotional attachment	Strong attachment, but not by speakers of other trad languages, including Tetum-Terik	Some attachment, among some adults	Hostility? Malay language influence on Tetum up to 19th century	Neutral
Usefulness (for other reasons)	Useful as local language of unification. Distinctively Timorese.	Useful for reading Portuguese historical texts	Useful for communicating with 200 million neighbours	Useful for tertiary work, as most univ textbooks and lectures are in English

Links with Other Countries for the sake of Higher Education, Advisors and Textbooks

Table 9: Advantages and disadvantages of Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Portugal/Brazil as providers of higher education, advisors and textbooks.

	Foreign Country for Higher Education ET students	**Foreign Country which will provide advisors**	**Foreign Country which will provide textbooks**
Australia (English)	~Close ~Expensive ~English (int'l lang) ~Good quality	~Close ~Many available ~Enthusiastic re ET ~Costs possibly absorbed by Aust. ~Sympathetic ideology and methodology	Many English textbooks and language books available and cheap to send
Indonesia (Indonesian/Malay)	~Close ~Cheap ~Similar lifestyle ~Indonesian useful regional language, but most textbooks in English ~Poor quality teaching and resources	~Close ~Not suitable ~Probably not interested. If interested, maybe for wrong reasons.	Indonesian textbooks available but very poor quality. Few Indonesian language learning books.
Malaysia (Indonesian/Malay)	~Medium distance ~Medium cost ~Similar lifestyle ~Malaysian useful regional language, but most textbooks in English ~Medium quality	~Medium distance ~Few available ~Possibly interested as Malaysia wants to expand influence	~Malaysian textbooks available and better quality than Indonesian books. Language learning books available.
Philippines (English)	Close ~Medium cost ~English (int'l lang) ~Medium quality	~Close ~Some available ~Some interest. Philippines is democratic country. ~Sympathetic ideology.	~English textbooks probably available.

Availability of educational help from abroad	None	Help available from Brazil & Portugal, but very distant (therefore costly)	Little help of any value from Indon, possibly some from Malaysia	Much help from Aust and English speaking countries. Australia close.
Usefulness in absorbing or rejecting Indonesians	Reject. But may attract Tetum speakers from West Timor	Reject	Absorb	Absorb

Notes:

1. The Medium of Instruction needs to be determined. There are three frameworks possible:

a) Use the home language (eg Tetum) for the first three years of schooling, then gradually transfer to the main Medium of Instruction (eg Indonesian/Malay, Portuguese or English)

b) Start the preferred Medium of Instruction in the first year of schooling.

c) Adopt two Mediums of Instruction: one for primary schooling (eg Tetum or Indonesian/Malay) and one for secondary schooling (eg Portuguese or English)

Portugal/Brazil (Portuguese)	~Very Distant ~Expensive ~Portuguese language useful ~Good quality	~Very distant ~Some available, but cost may prevent many coming	~Portuguese textbooks and language learning books available. More appropriate from Mozambique?

Notes:

a) The factors listed above include:

* Language
* Distance from East Timor
* Cost
* Ideological sympathy
* Availability of resources

b) An independent East Timor may wish to form links with one or more foreign country.

c) The choice of linking countries will be determined in large part by the language chosen as the Medium of Instruction.

d) In turn, the factors listed above will also influence the choice of the Medium of Instruction.